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James Scarola  
Vice President  
Harris Nuclear Plant

October 11, 2001

Ms. Carol Hanlon  
U.S. Department of Energy  
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office (M/S #025)  
P.O. Box 30307  
North Las Vegas, Nevada 89036-0307

Dear Ms. Hanlon:

As Vice President of CP&L's Harris Nuclear Plant in New Hill, North Carolina, I respectfully provide the following comments on the preliminary site suitability evaluation (PSSE) of Yucca Mountain and its use as a permanent repository for spent nuclear fuel and high level radioactive waste. These comments are pursuant to the Federal Register notice requesting comments on the PSSE.

Nuclear power generation accounts for approximately 20% of the electricity in the United States. Nuclear power is a safe, efficient means of generation, and without the resolution of a central waste repository site and its implementation, it is inconceivable that our nation's utilities will build additional needed nuclear power plants. I believe it is absolutely essential that the United States honor its commitment to manage the waste products of nuclear energy in an environmentally responsible manner, now and in the future. The federal government enacted policy that used nuclear fuel would not be reprocessed but would be safely stored and monitored in a central location. And, as a nuclear professional with more than twenty years experience in the industry, it is a source of frustration that the public.

CP&L, like other utilities across the country, applied for a license amendment at the Harris Plant to expand existing storage in the interim. During the Harris Plant license amendment process, we experienced first-hand the frustration of the public with the lack of a central repository. We experienced two years of extensive technical and public review for a license amendment, and throughout the public meeting process, citizens wanted to know why the federal repository was not yet complete.

We need a central repository in a location that will best protect public health and safety, and based on the scientific and technical evidence, Yucca Mountain is the site. I believe that Yucca Mountain is the safest, best-suited site in the United States for our much-needed national nuclear waste repository. I strongly encourage the Department of Energy (DOE) to proceed with this recommendation to President Bush.

The scientific evidence gathered by the DOE over the past twenty years supports the approval of Yucca Mountain as the country's underground disposal facility for used nuclear fuel and radioactive waste. There are no technical or scientific issues that would prohibit Yucca Mountain from serving as the permanent repository for nuclear waste in the United States.

It is equally critical that the DOE continue to request adequate funds from Congress to keep this program on track, and that our government leaders move forward without delay to approve and develop the national repository.

Sincerely,

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cc: Secretary Spencer Abraham